



**People First<sup>®</sup> of California, Inc.**  
1225 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210 • Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone (916) 552-6625 • Fax (916) 387-2379  
**[www.peoplefirstca.org](http://www.peoplefirstca.org) • [info@peoplefirstca.org](mailto:info@peoplefirstca.org)**

## **Press Release**

### **PFCA Hires New Executive Director Joe Meadours**



**Joe Meadours is welcomed  
to PFCA by President  
Michael Cooke**

With continued funding from a generous grant from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, PFCA conducted a second round of interview Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. After interviewing a large and fantastic pool of applicants People First of California, Inc. is pleased to announce the hiring of Joe Meadours as their new Executive Director. Joe takes on the role as the only Executive Director with a developmental disability heading a statewide self-advocacy organization run by and for people with developmental disabilities within the nation. Joe will begin work May 14<sup>th</sup> in his new position and is ready

to hit the Capitol running. At that time Joe will be available through the PFCA office at (916) 552-6625 and through his email at [joe@peoplefirstca.org](mailto:joe@peoplefirstca.org). Robin Rhoades will continue to function as the Executive Support Staff to assist Joe and the Board in their ventures in the state. Joe will join a fantastic PFCA Staff Team including SoCal Outreach Self-Advocate Leader Liz Lyons, her Helper Melvin Spicer, California Memorial Project Coordinator Linda Thompson, Board Co-Helper Robin Ponciano, and PFCA Administrator Mike Everson.

#### **PREVIOUS & CURRENT EXPERIENCE**

Joe has been in the People First self-advocacy movement since the early 90's. He has traveled to a number of states to talk about People First and self-advocacy. Presently, Joe comes from Montgomery Alabama where he was a Director of Consumer Empowerment for the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities there. Through this powerful position, Joe was able to promote self-advocacy, meet with self-advocates, families, and providers to tell them about how the state system works and who people with developmental disabilities are and can be!

*"Self-Advocates Training Self-Advocates"*

Joe also sits on the National Arc US Board of Directors as well as the National Disabilities Policy's Board of Directors. He has written a book about relationships to help his peers to be safe and have fulfilled relationships.

Joe has worked all over the United State including Oklahoma, Alabama, Tennessee, Illinois and now California. Joe looks forward to the work that is ahead of him. Though this position will be an exciting challenge he knows that he has the tools and resources to be successful and continue to bring People First of California to the table. He was ecstatic and thankful that People First of California believed in his abilities to hire him as Executive Director to continue to bring their message that people with disabilities should be seen for their strengths and their abilities as well as be a strong voice "at the table."

One of his personal goals is to write another book about the states that he has lived and worked in, and explore the challenges that people with disabilities have in each of these states. He'd like to compare the services from state to state.

### **DIRECTING PFCA & DEVELOPING BOARDSMANSHIP RESOURCES**

As Joe comes on board with PFCA he'll be working with the Board in developing a Boardsmanship Resource Workbook along with his normal duties of running the business of PFCA. For the next six months Joe and his staff team will work in meeting and collecting data from a simple survey with People First Chapters, self-advocacy groups, and boards of various agencies within the state to figure out what resources would best help self-advocates and boards to have active self-advocate board members. PFCA has already established a Steering Committee to also start collecting various resources that can be digitized so that they will be available on PFCA's website that is being revised to be more accessible and interactive for people with developmental disabilities. The eventual goal would be that in year two, PFCA would develop a Boardsmanship Workbook and Training that also good point people to the PFCA website that can have "clearing-house" web pages with actual digitized resources to download and links to other sites where people can learn more about being on a Board.

Michael Cooke, President, is happy to welcome Joe aboard and believes the Board made the right decision in hiring him. He looks forward to working with Joe to help him get accustomed to California's "ways" of doing things but believes Joe will be a great asset to the Board as a fresh voice with much experience in the movement. Please join us in welcoming Joe Meadours to PFCA.

*"Self-Advocates Training Self-Advocates"*